

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-49 (canceled).

Claim 50 (new): A process for producing a pet food comprising:

mixing a protein source to produce an emulsion;

heating said emulsion above the boiling point of water;

pressurizing said emulsion in a confined pressurized zone;

disrupting the emulsion mechanically in said confined pressurized zone using an injector/shredder assembly to form individual pieces or chunks of pet food having irregular exterior surface contours;

coloring said exterior surface contours in said confined pressurized zone by utilizing the injector/shredder assembly to inject negatively charged colorant into the emulsion to adhere the colorant to the exterior surface contours; and

discharging said individual pieces or chunks of pet food.

Claim 51 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said protein source comprises at least one source selected from the group consisting of a vegetable source, a meat source, and a meat by-product source.

Claim 52 (new): The process of Claim 51 wherein said vegetable source comprises at least one source selected from the group consisting of a soy source, a corn source, a rice source, a peanut source, a sunflower source, a linseed source, a canola source, and a wheat source.

Claim 53 (new): The process of Claim 51 wherein said meat source comprises at least one source selected from the group consisting of a beef source, a chicken source, a fish source, and a pork source.

Claim 54 (new): The process of Claim 53 wherein said meat source contains from about 15% to about 25% fat by weight.

Claim 55 (new): The process of Claim 53 wherein said meat source contains less than 15% fat by weight.

Claim 56 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein the emulsion has a protein to fat ratio of at least 1.5:1.

Claim 57 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said emulsion is heated to a temperature between about 104°C and about 118°C.

Claim 58 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said emulsion has a moisture content from about 45% to about 80% by weight.

Claim 59 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said confined pressurized zone is at least one of an elongated tubular member and a holding tube.

Claim 60 (new): The process of Claim 59 wherein the emulsion is restricted in said holding tube for a predefined period of time.

Claim 61 (new): The process of Claim 59 wherein the emulsion is contained in said holding tube having a pressure above the vapor pressure of said emulsion.

Claim 62 (new): The process of Claim 61 wherein the emulsion is retained in said holding tube under a pressure greater than its vapor pressure until the protein in said emulsion has coagulated to form a firm emulsion.

Claim 63 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said injector/shredder assembly comprises at least an injector assembly and a shredder assembly.

Claim 64 (new): The process of Claim 63 wherein said injector assembly comprises a means of injecting steam to disrupt the emulsion.

Claim 65 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said colorant comprises at least one colorant selected from the group consisting of an oil based colorant and a water-soluble colorant.

Claim 66 (new): The process of Claim 65 wherein said colorant further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of a flavor and a nutrient.

Claim 67 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said colorant is negatively charged with respect to the emulsion.

Claim 68 (new): The process of Claim 67 wherein said colorant comprises a water soluble, caramel color having a negative charge with respect to the emulsion.

Claim 69 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said colorant is capable of adhering to the emulsion without the presence of a binder.

Claim 70 (new): The process of Claim 50 wherein said discharging step comprises the step of removing said emulsion from said confined pressurized zone and cutting said colored emulsion in pieces of varying size, shape and color.

Claim 71 (new): The process of Claim 70 wherein said colored emulsion has a moisture content from about 50% to about 65% by weight.

Claim 72 (new): A process for producing a pet food comprising:
mixing a protein source to produce an emulsion;
heating said emulsion above the boiling point of water;
pressurizing said emulsion in a confined pressurized zone;
disrupting the emulsion in said confined pressurized zone to form individual pieces or chunks of pet food having irregular exterior surface contours;

coloring said exterior surface contours in said confined pressurized zone by adhering a colorant to the exterior surface contours, wherein the colorant is negatively charged with respect to the emulsion; and

discharging said individual pieces or chunks of pet food.

Claim 73 (new): The process of Claim 72 wherein said colorant comprises a water soluble, caramel color having a negative charge with respect to the emulsion.

Claim 74 (new): A process for producing a pet food having a layered, meat-like appearance and chunky, irregularly-shaped, individual pieces having a darkened exterior surface to simulate grill marks which comprises:

passing a product mass through a confined processing zone;

disrupting the product mass in the confined processing zone to form individual pieces or chunks of pet food having irregular exterior surface contours; and

contacting at least a portion of the exterior surface contours of the pieces or chunks with a colorant while in the confined processing zone, wherein the colorant is negatively charged with respect to the product mass to promote adhesion of the colorant to the product mass.

Claim 75 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said product mass consists of an emulsion comprising at least one source selected from the group consisting of a meat source and dry proteinaceous source.

Claim 76 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said product mass comprises less than 15% fat by weight.

Claim 77 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said product mass has a moisture content from about 50% to about 65% by weight.

Claim 78 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said colorant adheres to the emulsion without the presence of a binder.

Claim 79 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said colorant is selected from the group consisting of water-soluble colorants and oil soluble colorants.

Claim 80 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said colorant comprises a colored solution, which comprises from about 30% to about 60% colorant by weight and from about 70% to about 40% water by weight.

Claim 81 (new): The process of Claim 80 wherein said colored solution is injected into said confined processing zone at a pressure that is higher than the pressure inside said confined zone and at a flow rate from about 1% to about 20% by weight of the product mass flow rate.

Claim 82 (new): The process of Claim 74 wherein said confined processing zone comprises a holding tube under a pressure greater than its vapor pressure and the process comprises maintaining the pressure until the protein in said emulsion has coagulated to form a firm emulsion.